

Origin, Development, Rise and Decline of Arabu-Tamil Language: Language as an Islamic Classifier

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Abstract

The Arab Muslim traders and the native Tamil converts to Islam in Tamil Nadu state of India, and Sri Lanka came into closer contact as a result of their commercial activities. They were bound by a common religion, but separated by two different languages and cultures. Hence, they felt the necessity of a language to be linked for commercial as well as religious affairs. Therefore they started to write Tamil in an adapted Arabic script called *Arabu-Tamil*. The *Arabu-Tamil* or *Arwi* script represents the Tamil language using an Arabic style of scripts. From 8th century to 19th century, this language enjoyed its popularity among Tamil speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. The valuable and useful ideas of Tamil Muslim minds were conveyed in Arabicized Tamil called *Arabu-Tamil*. It rendered the most useful service for the advancement and progress of Arab and Tamil cultures. However, the beginning of the 20th century saw the decline of *Arwi* language. And no step was taken to arrest this decline. This study analyses its rise and decline as a language of Tamil Muslims in an Islamic perspective.

Key words: Arabu-Tamil, Tamil, Arabic, Tamil Nadu and Muslims.

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1. Introduction:

Arwi or *Arabu-Tamil* is an Arabic-influenced dialect of the Tamil language written with an extension of the Arabic alphabet, with extensive lexical and phonetic influences from the Arabic language.

Arabu-Tamil was used extensively by the Muslim minority of Tamil Nadu state of India and Sri Lanka. This language was devised as a means of communication and interaction for the settled Arabs of Tamil Nadu and the Tamil-speaking people. It is an outcome of the cultural synthesis between seafaring Arabs and Tamil-speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu. It was popular in Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. It has a rich body of literature of which little has been preserved. There are historical records of the prevalence of *Arabu-Tamil* in far Eastern countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand, till the 1970s (“Arwi Language”).

Arabu-Tamil language served as a medium of transformation of the Muslim Tamil society of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka in their daily affairs to write many religious, literary and poetry texts for communication. The *Arabu-Tamil* script represents the Tamil language (having left-to-right script) using an Arabic style of script (having right-to-left script). The *Arwi* or *Arabu-Tamil* script was widely used by the Tamil Muslims of Asia for their daily communication. From the 8th century to the 19th century, this language enjoyed its popularity among Tamil-speaking Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Ceylon. It continues to enjoy the same popularity with the Muslims of Ceylon even today. The Tamil-speaking Muslims of Ceylon consider this *Arabu-Tamil* literature as their most beloved literature (Rahim, PP. 415-16). However, after the 19th century, it began to lose its popularity primarily because of its old style and colloquial

expression. As a spoken language it is now about to be extinct, though a few *Madrasas* still teach the basics of the language as part of their curricula.

The primary objective of this study is to share the magnificent literary history and the Islamic legacy of *Arabu-Tamil* language and literature to the Islamic world. This paper makes an analysis of its origin, development, rise and decline as a language of Tamil Muslims.

2. Tamil and Muslims:

Tamil is a Dravidian language spoken predominantly by Tamil people of the Indian subcontinent. It has an official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Tamil is also an official language of Sri Lanka and Singapore. Tamils are a linguistic and ethnic group native to Tamil Nadu, a state in India and the north-eastern region of Sri Lanka. The term 'Tamil Muslim' refers to the Muslims who have Tamil as their mother tongue. Apart from India and Sri Lanka, large populations of Tamil Muslims also live in some countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius and also in the Gulf countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Tamil is also spoken by these Tamil minorities in these respective countries.

3. Islam in Tamil Nadu:

In the pre-Islamic period, there were frequent contacts between Arabia and Tamil Nadu, and there were Arab colonies in South India. The classical Tamil literature, like in the literary works, such as *Paththu Pattu*, *Ettutthogai*, bears evidence to the Arab contact with Tamil Nadu. But when Islam emerged as a religion in Arabia, it influenced it influenced the neighbouring countries as well as far and wide countries. In this course, it came to Tamil Nadu and Sri

Lanka through the commercial contacts. After the rise of Islam, the Arabs continued to remain in contact actively not only as traders but also as missionaries. So both trade and Islam flourished actively and the Muslims were permitted to follow their religion freely. The source available to us says that the companions of the Prophet Muḥammed (PBUH) namely Saint Tamim al-Dari al-Ansari and Saint Ukkaza were buried in Tamil Nadu.

It is to be noted that the Tamil Muslims of Tamil Nadu are considered among big contributors of Tamil society because they contributed their best to the Tamil culture and civilization. The rulers of these areas patronized Islam and Muslims to flourish in Tamil Nadu. Some of them even donated lands to the Muslims for their mosques. They include the kings of Chera, Chozha and Pandyas. Muslims built *Masjids* in various places of this country. The first and foremost among such *Masjids* is the one which can be seen even today near the railway station in Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, though it is now in a dilapidated condition. The Arabic inscription stone available in that *Masjid* indicates that it was constructed in the year 734 (corresponding 116 AH, Islamic Era), and it was built by Muḥammed bin Hamid bin Abdullah. This proves that Muslims lived in this region in the 8th century liberally with all proprietary rights in this land (Samuel, P. 271).

4. Islam in Sri Lanka:

The Muslims are the second largest minority in Sri Lanka approximating to 8 percent of its population. In Sri Lanka, the Arab settlements lived along the coast of Jaffna, Mannar, Kendremalai, Puttalam, Colombo, Beruwala, Galle and at the eastern port of Trincomalle. A large population of the Moors

in Sri Lanka is said to be descended from the traders who arrived from Arabia and the lands around the Persian Gulf (Maharroof, PP. 407-08).

The similarities of the socio-religious paradigms of the Muslims of South India and Sri Lanka are quite enormous. These may be summarized as follows (Maharroof, P. 409):

- a. The home language of Sri Lankan Muslims and those of Tamil Nadu is Tamil.
- b. The Muslims in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu is a dialect that has substantial number of Turko-Perso-Arabic loan words
- c. There is close cultural synthesis between the Muslims of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu
- d. Muslim Missionaries in Tamil Nadu for the ages have entered Sri Lanka and assisted to shape the religious thinking of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. These Muslim missionaries also helped in the establishment of Tariqa. Most of the Qadiriyyah sub-fraternities in Sri Lanka originate from their headquarters in Kilakarai, Kayalpattanam and Kottaru. Kilakarai and Kayalpattanam are ports in Ramnad and Tirunelveli districts respectively. Kottaru is a town in Tamil Nadu, close to the Kerala state.

5. Origin:

Arabu-Tamil dialect was used by the Arabs who came and settled in Tamil Nadu. The settled Arabs in Tamil Nadu learnt Tamil through Arabic Script and wrote Tamil in Arabic script. It is believed that the origin of *Arabu-Tamil* is as old as contact of Arabs with Tamil Nadu (Rahman, P. 23). The Muslim communities of Sarandib (Sri Lanka) and Tamil Nadu were able to use this language as an effective tool for the preservation of

their cultural identity. They were able to safeguard their culture without sacrificing their religion (Shuaib, P. 91). *Arabu-Tamil* was the product of the cultural synthesis between the Arabs and the Tamil speaking Muslims. It is a combination of Arabic and Tamil, but it seemed to be written in Arabic script. After the advent of Islam the Arabs who already settled down in these areas, they naturally became the representatives of Islam there. In course of time, the native population also joined them by embracing Islam. When two communities, bounded by a common religion despite of their different languages and cultures, came into closer contacts, owing to their commercial activities, and they felt the necessity for a link-language. This ultimately gave birth to the *Arabu-Tamil* language. *Arabu-Tamil* represents the fusion of two great languages, belonging to the great ethnic groups, one being the Semitic-Arabic and the other the Dravidian-Tamil.

The Arabs of Tamil Nadu wanted to learn Tamil, which was also an ancient language like Arabic. They started learning Tamil with the help of their own Arabic script. Having learnt this, they started conveying their ideas in this newly originated and newly blended language. In early days, the Arabs were accustomed with colloquial style, when they adopted this they completely ignored Tamil Grammar. They used Tamil Language in their daily life as the English men used it in later days. It must be noted that the Arabs before writing the Tamil in Arabic script, used to remember orally most of the words of daily use. Later they put the same in Arabic script. This way the *Arabu-Tamil* language was originated in Tamil Nadu (Samuel, P. 273). In the beginning, the Arabians conveyed their ideas in words and the Tamilians absorbed, grasped and adopted these words and used them in their daily life and

these words were considered to be most important ones for commercial purposes. Even today most of these words are in use. They are used not only by the Tamilians but also by the people of India. The Arabic words which are in common use are as follows (Rahman, P. 25):

'Amul (عمل), Aṣal (أصل), Aajar (حاضر), Kaidi (قيدى), Kajāna (خزانة), Mahajar (مهاجر), Jāmin (ضامن), Dīwān (ديوان), Dawā' (دواء), Jilla (جيلا), Ta'luk (تعلق), Nakal (نقل), Mile (ميل), Jabthi (ضبط), Amīna (أمينة), Masoda (مسودة), Munṣif (منصف), Wakkil (وكيل), Inam (إنعام), Sharathu (طرش), Maḥṣūl (محصول), Waṣūl (وصول), Mirasa (ميراث), Varisu (وارث), Lāyak (لائق), Bāqī (باقي), Jawābu (جواب), Kamm (كم), Sharbat (شربت), Jubba (جابت), Faiṣal (فيصل), Thakarāru (تكرار), Raṣīdu (رصيد), Pasali (فصلي), Ma'amūl (معمول), Maidanam [(Maidan) (ميدان)], Vagaiyera (وغيره)...etc.

It is worth mentioning that Tamil words lack the capacity to convey the full significance of the Islamic terms like Rasūl (رسول), Saḥābah (صحابه), Wājib (واجب), Jannath (جنة), Jahannam (جهنم), Īmān (إيمان), Taqwá (تقوى) etc., (their respective meanings are Messenger, Companions of the Prophet, Obligatory, Paradise, Hell, Belief, Piety...etc). That is the main reason that *Arabu-Tamil* words are used in these cases for better expression and understanding. Hence the Tamil Muslims naturally preferred the *Arabu-Tamil* Language. The new language was shaped in a manner that retains all the basic aspects of the finest spoken Tamil, and all of its grammatical forms, put on the beautiful garb of the Arabic script. Arabic letters with suitably added diacritical marks were devised. *Arabu-Tamil* still has a place among the more traditional Indian Tamil Muslim and Sri Lankan Moor families.

Today, it exists only informally in the speech of the Tamil spoken Muslims, as many words unique to it are used in their spoken Tamil. Some of these words that constitute daily conversations among Muslims for example are: Muṣṭabah (مصيبة), Maut (موت), Janāzah (جنازة), Rāḥat (راحة), Shifā' (شفاء), Khair (خير), Wallāhi (والله), Ta'līm (تعليم), Kitāb (كتاب), Shaiṭān (شيطان), Sharbat (شربت), Saḥan (صحن), Bait (بيت), Bi'at (بيعة), Shirk (شرك), Ṭayyib (طيب) and Ikhlāṣ (إخلاص).

6. Place of Origin:

The fact that *Arabu-Tamil* prevalent in Colombo, Kayalpattinam, Kilakarai indicates that it was in use, as early as the 8th century of the Christian era (Samuel, P. 275). The Arabs and the Tamil Muslim, according to sources available to us, have played their role equally in the formation of *Arabu-Tamil*. It is the result of joint efforts of the Arabs and the Tamil Muslims. It originated in South-West Coast of Ceylon as well as in the South-East Coast of India, more particularly in Kayalpattinam. This language was enriched, promoted and developed in Kayalpattinam. It rendered the most useful service for the advancement and progress of Arab and Tamil cultures.

7. Arabu-Tamil Script:

The *Arabu-Tamil* consists of 40 letters, out of which 28 letters are from Arabic and 12 letters are devised by adding some marks and dots to the original Arabic Alphabet. 18 Arabic letters do not have their equivalents in Tamil from the phonetic point of view and similarly 10 Tamil letters and two vowel sounds have no equivalents in Arabic. Thus the *Arabu-Tamil* alphabet is the Arabic alphabet with the devised twelve additional letters to represent the Tamil vowels and several Tamil consonants that could not be mapped to Arabic sounds.

ا	ب	ت	ث	ج
چ	ح	خ	د	د
ي	ذ	ر	ر	ز
س	ش	ص	ض	جذ
ص	ط	ظ	ع	ع
غ	ف	ق	ك	ك
ك	ل	م	ن	ن
ن	و	ه	لاء	ی

8. Specimen of Arabu-Tamil writing (Hand written):

شُونَكَ إِسْلَامِي كَلَامِي كَلَامِي
(أَمِينِي كَلَامِي)

تَعَجُّبُكَ بِأَمْتِ نَلِّ وَأَضَتْكُمْ مُسَوِّغَاتِهِمْ
كَوْرُوْثُوْهُ كَضْبِ كُوْذِي بِرِسْبَدِلْ وَنِي
٢٧ م زنبُرْ أَلْمَا كِي شُونَكَ إِسْلَامِي كَلَامِي
نَلِي مُكَلِّدِي دَتْرِفِي وَضَاوَلِكِي ١٩٦٥ - مِي مَاتَمِ
٣٠ م تَلِكْ صَجْرَة ١٣٨٥ مُحْرَمِ وَرِي ٢٨ بِاِيْر
٤-١٥ مَنِكْ شَمَكْمِ صَكْمَارِ تَجْكُطِي
أَنْبَدْنِ أَصْبِيكِرُومِ
كَوْبِ وَغُرْمَرِ تِرِ دِي سِينَانَايِكْ أُوْرُكْصِ
بَا فَكَارْتِ فَكِي تِرِ يَنْيَكْمِ بِشِيَاوَرِكْصِ
نَلِيْتَلِيُوْرِ جَنَابِ بِنِيْرِ رَاْرِفِ قَرِيْدِ أُوْرُكْصِ
مُكَلِّدِي دَتِّي تِرِنْتِ وَنَبَقَارِ كْصِ

(Transliteration of the above Invitation in Tamil)

சோனக இஸ்லாமிய கலாச்சார நிலையம்
(அமைக்கப்பட்டது)

தங்களுக்கு எமது நல்வாழ்த்தும் சோபனமும் கூறுவதோடு
கொழும்பு கோட்டை பிரிஸ்டல் வீதி, 27 ஆம் நம்பர்
இல்லமாகிய இஸ்லாமிய கலாச்சார நிலைய புதுக்கட்டிட
திறப்பு விழாவிற்கு 1965, மே மாதம் 30 ஆம் தேதி, ஹிஜ்ரா
1385 முஹர்ரம் 28 பிறை ஞாயிறு பிற்பகல் 4:15 மணிக்கு
சங்கமிக்குமாறு தங்களை அன்புடன் அழைக்கிறோம்.

கௌரவ பிரதமர் திரு.டட்லி சோனானாயக அவர்கள்
ஞாபகார்த்த பலகையை திரை நீக்கம் செய்வார்கள்.
தலைமை நிலையத் தலைவர் ஜனாப் சர் ராஜிக் :பரீத்
அவர்கள் புதுக்கட்டிடத்தை திறந்து வைப்பார்கள்.

(Translation of the above Invitation in English)

Sonaga¹ Islamic Cultural Centre (Established)

We send you our felicitations, greetings and cordially invite
you to attend the opening ceremony of our new building at
No. 27 Bristol Street, Fort, Colombo, on the 30th May, 1965,
the 28th Day of Muharram 1385, Sunday afternoon, 4:15 pm.

Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Dudley Senanayake will unveil
the commemoration block. The President of the centre, Sir
Razik Fareed will open the building.

9. Specimen of Arabu-Tamil writing (Computer encoded):

The following are the few couplets of an *Arabu-Tamil* poem
written by Sayyid Muḥammed Imam al-Arūs (1816-1898 A.D):

¹ Muslim Tamils of Sri Lanka were referred by the pejorative term Sonaga
or Sonagar

يَا جُؤْمُ وَلَوْ قِيَّ بَكَتْنَا
تَكْرِيمِ تَوَقُّتْنَا جُؤْمِي

(Transliteration of the above couplet in Tamil)

என்னை ஆளும் வல்லோனே ஏகாந்த நாதா
தன்னை அறியும் தவத்தை தந்தாள்குவாய் நீ

(Translation of the above couplet in English)

O Almighty Who rules over me! O my Master who is the only
Lord!

Bless me with the boon of realizing the insignificance of
myself.

أَتَيْتُ وَيَرِي أَرِي وَضَيْتُ
بِي وَدُمُ حَقَّكَ أُنْزِلُ أَضَيْتُ

(Transliteration of the above couplet in Tamil)

உன்னை அல்லாது வேறு யாரை விளிப்பேன்
என்னை விட்டும் ஹக்காக உன்னில் ஒளிப்பேன்

(Translation of the above couplet in English)

Whom can I beseech except Thee!

I will [leave my wretched self and] annihilate in Thee!

10. Status and Recognition of Arabu-Tamil:

The UNO has accepted *Arabu-Tamil* as one of the approved languages of the world. "The UNESCO COURIER" published by the UNESCO, in August – September 1981, has published an article on the life of the Prophet, written by Muḥammed Yāsīn (Shuaib, P. 90).

11. Development of Arabu-Tamil Language and Literature:

This new language became the mother tongue of the Muslim community. It is developed as the medium for their daily affairs including business, property dealings, correspondence, and all other social transaction.

Literature produced in prose and poetry in this unique language covers a vast field of subjects like:

1. Architecture	2. Astronomy	3. Creed
4. Biography	5. Commentary on Quran	6. Dictionary
7. Elegy	8. Fiction	9. Islamic Jurisprudence
10. History	11. Horticulture	12. Logic
13. Medicine	14. Moral science	15. Satire
16. Sexology	17. Sports	18. Mysticism etc.

This language developed during the early medieval ages. Its literature is mostly of religious character. Tamil scholars, through their works, contributed immensely to the development of this language and literature. In the words of Edgard Thurston, *Arabu-Tamil* is a literature which was developed for the purpose of the education of Labbai¹ and Maraikayar² children. The Koran and other books were published in this language.

¹ *Labbai* is a distinctive Islamic community from Southern India. A Trading Community spread throughout the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Labbais follow either the Hanafi or Shafi'i School of Fiqh.

² *Maraikayar* is a distinctive Tamil- and Malayalam-speaking Muslim people of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in India. Some of the places abundant

The origin of this literature may be traced to Kayalpatnam¹, Melapalayam and other unimportant Labbai Towns in the Tirunelveli District (Samuel, P. 271). The orthographic practices adopted by the many authors who wrote in *Arabu-Tamil* were not all alike. The consequent variations are noticeable in their writings. In linguistic term the language is composed of more than one set of grammars and vocabularies that a speaker may switch back and forth, depending on the situation. As a written language it employs an invented orthography for a creolized, or mixed, system of speech patterns. The structure and principles of its development are possibly related to similar systems known for other similar Islamic speech and writing systems such as Swahili language of Tanzania of East Africa, Jaawi language of Malaysia and languages of other countries namely Turkey, Uzbek, Berber, Somali and Malay.

Four hundred years ago, a particular procedure and a new literary style was adopted in *Arabu-Tamil* writing. This new literary style was adopted by Hafiz Amir Wali Appa, a saint of Kayalpattinam. He is considered to be the first person who re-introduced *Arabu-Tamil* after the Portuguese devastation in around 1600 (Zubair, P. 189). His tomb is available in the weaver's street, in Kayalpattinam. The style of Hafiz Amir

with Maricars are Kayalpatnam (which is thought to be the ancestral hometown of the early Maricars), Kilakarai, Adirampattinam, Muthupet, Nagore, Nagapattinam, Karaikal and various other coastal towns. Traditionally, the Maricars engaged in mercantile commerce. They generally dealt with gems, precious stones, jewels, timber and the textile trade.

¹ Kayalpatnam is a town in the Tuticorin (formerly of Tirunelveli) district of Tamil Nadu, India. Kayalpatnam is an ancient historical city. It lies in the southeast part of Indian peninsula, on the shore off the Bay of Bengal. It is a Muslim dominant town. It is situated about 400 miles from Madras (Chennai) and about 100 miles from Trivandrum and Madurai. Kayalpatnam was an important trade emporium even before the advent of Islam.

Wali Appa perfected the *Arabu-Tamil* to a large extent. Method of its writing and speaking, though existed even before Hafiz Amir Wali Appa, was not systematic. It was purely a colloquial one. Amir Wali was the first man who promoted this language through systematic style of writing and rendered a great contribution to make it a standard literature. Thereafter, its literature flourished in Burma and the Far Eastern countries where the Tamil Muslims lived. A book in *Arabu-Tamil* by the name "*Haqiqatul Insan*" was printed in Rangoon, in 1882. The book contains 174 pages. Three more books were written and published from Akyab, Mohmein of Burma (Presently Myanmar). According to A.M.A. Azeez of Sri Lanka, the Leiden University in Holland has several *Arabu-Tamil* books written by Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. There are *Arabu-Tamil* schools functioning on a large scale in Malaysia, Singapore, Burma and Pakistan (Karachi) even today. According to Aziz, out of 15,000 books kept in the Indian Office Library in London, nearly 60 are in *Arabu-Tamil*; famous among them are Nondi Nadagam (1872) and Sira Nadagam (1878).

Arabu-Tamil Periodicals were as follows (Shuaib, P. 103):

- a. *Allamat Lankapuri* – A Journal which was published in Colombo from 1869.
 - b. *Ajaibul Akhbar* - A Weekly which was published in Madras (Chennai) in 1870's.
 - c. *Muslim Nesan*- A Newspaper which was published in Colombo from 21-12-1882.
 - d. *Kashfurrān an Qalbil Jan* which was published in Colombo from 1889.
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12. Contribution of Arabu-Tamil:

The religious revival of the Muslims was made possible because of this voluminous literature in *Arabu-Tamil* produced by the Muslim Savants after the devastating cultural onslaught by the Portuguese in this area in 16th century. This onslaught took place in 1528 and in 1537. Literature produced in this language covered the fields of Jurisprudence, Sufism, Law, Medicine, and Poetry. *Arabu-Tamil* was also used as a bridge language for Tamil Muslims to learn Arabic. Compositions of devotional songs used in certain Islamic ceremonies were originally written in *Arabu-Tamil* by their authors. *Thalai Fathiha* - a well known *Arabu-Tamil* song is devotionally sung by women in ceremonies.

There are thousands of *Arabu-Tamil* books on different subjects. Names of the various books on different subjects with their authors are systematically organized, in the Madras Archives Catalogues. These catalogues are maintained from 1890. Periods of the catalogues are as follows: 1890-1901; 1901-1910; 1911-1915 and 1921-25. According to the catalogues, there are more than 3,000 *Arabu-Tamil* books. The most important book is *Arabu-Tamil Dictionary* in four bulky volumes written by Hakkim Muhammed Abdullah Sahib. This literature helped the Tamil Muslims to know about their religion and their culture on one hand and on the other it also made the Arabic literature simpler (Samuel, P. 277).

13. Decline of Arabu-Tamil Language:

Arabu-Tamil language originated in the 8th century, flourished during the medieval ages and saw its decline from the beginning of the 19th century. In the Era of Globalization, no step was taken to arrest this decline of this language which had the south Asia based cultural and historical background.

Today *Arabu-Tamil* is known to be a matter of least scholarly interest in some parts of Tamil Nadu state of India and Sri Lanka. This literature did not receive much attention in the later part of the 20th century. Other languages such as English replaced it in many contexts. One most important reason for its decline is the lack of competitive printing facilities. Printing of *Arabu-Tamil* books is a very complicated and tedious process. Therefore, people preferred printing their religious books in Tamil rather than in *Arabu-Tamil* language. During the early 20th century the adoption of Urdu as the dominant Islamic school curriculum, which is ethnocentrically unconcerned with *Arabu-Tamil* which has a different South Asia based cultural and historical background, is also another reason for its decline.

14. Conclusion and Remarks:

In the age of modern education, Muslim children failed to learn *Arabu-Tamil* language, as it was out of the school curriculum. In the religious educational institutions, a systematic north Indian syllabus known as *Silsilatun Nizamiyyah* was adopted by the *Madrasahs* in the beginning of the 20th century in Tamil Nadu. *Arabu-Tamil* as a language and subject did not find a place in that syllabus.

The decline of *Arabu-Tamil* language is a great loss to the Tamil Muslim community as this was their religious language. It had safeguarded the interest of this community. It was fondly and reverently nurtured by noble savants. Therefore, its necessity must be felt by the present Tamil Muslim community. Its revival and renaissance is badly needed. The following steps are suggested to arrest its decline and revitalize its literature for the cultural benefit of particularly the Tamil Muslim Community:

- a. All the *Arabu-Tamil* language books available should be collected and re-printed. Unpublished manuscripts also should be collected and printed.
- b. *Arabu-Tamil* language should be made compulsory in all the *Madrasahs* of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka.
- c. *Arabu-Tamil* books must be taught to children attending schools as a part of school curriculum.
- d. *Arabu-Tamil* community must be encouraged to use it in their daily affairs.
- e. Periodicals and magazines in this language should be re-introduced.

With these measures taken we may witness the period of renaissance in *Arabu-Tamil* language and literature in the years to come.

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